



William Baird, *History of New Testament Research: Volume Three-From C.H. Dodd to Hans Dieter Betz* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press), 2013.

Baird's massive work is divided into three major sections: Part One: The Renaissance of New Testament Criticism. Part Two: The Revisiting of Critical Problems. And Part Three: Theological and Synthesizing Movements.

Each major section is a thorough investigation of the prime movers in New Testament research and no significant scholar or theologian is left aside. So, for instance, whilst discussing 'The Zenith of Enlightenment Criticism' (Ch 1) Vincent Taylor, H.J. Cadbury, T.W. Manson, and C.H. Dodd are examined in terms of both life and work. And that is where this volume, indeed, where this three volume history shows its strength. Each scholar isn't merely analyzed in terms of his or her work- rather, their work is set in the context of their life.

The work contains, because of that fact, numerous wonderful anecdotes and fantastic summaries and intriguing asides which give such a full picture of the scholars and scholarship under investigation that no other volume surpasses it.

When Baird arrives at the second chapter, where he treats 'The New Biblical Theology' he focuses his gaze on Karl Barth's work (and life) and he does so for the first 22 pages of the chapter. Only then does he return to a treatment of Rudolf Bultmann (he also treats Bultmann in the second volume of the series) and the heirs of Bultmann, the 'Bultmann School'. Correctly Baird asserts

Rudolf Bultmann is the most important NT scholar of the twentieth century (p. 85).

Indeed he indisputably is. And so he receives a thorough going-over, extending through p. 117. Baird demonstrates so clearly here his thorough grasp of both the field of New Testament research and the biographies and work of the major players that one cannot but help being massively impressed. Students of the subject simply cannot do better than consulting (and reading thoroughly) Baird's so very comprehensive work.

Baird notes, further, of Bultmann

... the influence of Barth and Bultmann, especially the latter, would still be apparent in the scholars reviewed even in the last chapter of this history (p. 117).

Bultmann was, and remains, in other words, the most influential New Testament scholar of the century (both the previous and the present).

Because of Bultmann's importance, Baird discusses in his third chapter 'The Bultmann School' and among Bultmann's students, naturally, involved descriptions of the work of Käsemann, Bornkamm, and Robinson.

Chapter four is a survey of the most important developments in the related fields of archaeology, textual criticism, and new discoveries which have significance for the subject (such as the Nag Hammadi codices and the Dead Sea Scrolls).

Chapter five may be the most important chapter in the book and indeed may well have been published as a separate treatment. It concerns itself with 'Historical Backgrounds: Judaism'. Here Baird looks into the lives and works of Joachim Jeremias and Matthew Black along with W.D. Davies and E.P. Sanders. Then Baird turns to the efforts of Martin Hengel. The work of these scholars and the importance of that work needs to be fully apprehended by students of New Testament research today.

The sixth chapter looks at developments in Historical Criticism. Baird is thoroughly unwilling to jettison the historical-critical methodology and here, I think, he shows quite clearly and quite cleverly how much value that particular methodology (or rather, set of methodologies) has for research. The major players are Kümmel and Koester, Conzelmann and Marxsen. Baird also here dives into the murky waters of Gospel source criticism, mining the work of Farmer and Goulder along with Kloppenborg.

Chapter seven handles Roman Catholic scholarship, but since this isn't particularly interesting to me I'll simply mention it and move on to other, better, more intriguing subjects (though I will note that the inestimably brilliant Rudolf Schnakenburg is discussed along with Ray Brown and John Meier. Truly, the cream of the Catholic crop).

Chapter eight is quite interesting as it describes not individual scholars but the growth and importance of scholarly societies which have to do with New Testament research: SBL, CBA, ETS, SNTS, and even the Jesus Seminar (with special focus on Funk).

The ninth chapter looks at 'Theological and Hermeneutical Developments' like 'Salvation History' and 'Biblical theology' and the work of F.F. Bruce! Bruce is justifiably lionized as one of the most important Evangelical scholars of the twentieth century.

The last two chapters, 10 and 11, discuss, in turn, 'Critical, Exegetical, and Theological Accomplishments' in Europe and in North America.

Each chapter concludes with an extensive list of notes which will lead readers to the primary sources Baird discusses in his descriptions of scholars and their lives and works.

It would be hard to overstate the delight to be had in reading this engaging and carefully crafted historical survey. Baird has produced a volume so enjoyable as to defy full and fair praise. I can just and merely advise, read it!

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